



What for?

The rate of obese and overweight youth in America is rising. This could jeopardize the future health and productivity of our children. Having a healthy environment – both in school and out – is important. The foods available to students at school should be nutritious ones. So should the foods at home. Nutrition education and physical activity should be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The healthy, nutritionally astute, and physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

Children who eat lunch at school eat more fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy than those who bring a lunch



School Wellness Policy



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What is it?

FACT: Congress passed a law in 2004 requiring every school using federal dollars for a school breakfast, lunch or milk program to implement a policy that addresses in-school nutrition and physical activity. Each school's policy should be a community effort, including students, school officials, business leaders, nutrition professionals, and parents.

"Competitive foods" are foods and drinks sold outside the cafeteria. They might be from vending machines, student stores, school fundraisers, or concessions. These items compete with the school's meal program and are not bound by the nutritional guidelines that school meals must follow. A school's wellness policy, however, may address how a school handles competitive foods



What does it do?

A school wellness policy should address nutrition standards, nutrition education, physical activity, guidelines for rewards, incentives and consequences in school, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. It should also include an evaluation component.

A wellness policy can make real changes in student nutrition and health. For instance, a school wellness policy could:

- Set nutrition standards for items sold in school vending machines
- Require that fundraisers use non-food items or healthier ones
- Ensure that school menus include whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables
- Offer recess before lunch so kids settle down to eat rather than rush to get outside
- Give students easy access to a healthy breakfast through a grab-and-go breakfast program

The South Dakota Department of Education has developed a model policy following the federal guidelines listed above. It can be viewed at doe.sd.gov/oess/cans/docs/Wellness_Policy.pdf.

What can I do?

- Find your school's wellness policy
- Speak up at school board meetings
- Serve on a wellness committee
- Create a healthier environment at home by cooking healthy foods and keeping nutritious foods in your house
- Encourage your child to be physically active
- Talk to your child about policy changes at school
- Keep good attitudes toward healthier habits
- Eat lunch or breakfast with your child at school to see for yourself how school meals have changed since your own school days

Students are more likely to choose healthy eating and activity habits if they see and experience them at home as well as school

